

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 ACDA-12 CIAE-00
NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-07 L-03 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 HA-05 IO-13
/098 W

-----100995 311433Z /46

O R 311245Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6151
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
DIA WASHDC
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY NIAMEY
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L NDJAMENA 0392

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MOPS
SUBJECT: DOWNING OF CHADIAN AIR FORCE PLANES

REF: NDJAMENA 0386

1. SUMMARY: FURTHER DETAILS ON THE DOWNING OF CHADIAN AIR
FORCE DC-3 AND DC-4 NOW MAKE IT LOOK AS THOUGH REBELS MAY
HAVE SURFACE TO AIR MISSILES. END SUMMARY

2. DC-3 WHICH WAS ON LOW LEVEL RECONNAISSANCE WITH THREE
FRENCH AND TWO CHADIAN OFFICERS ON BOARD WAS SHOT DOWN
SATURDAY, ABOUT TEN KILOMETERS ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE
DUNES OUTSIDE FAYA LARGEAU. A RESCUE FORCE FROM FAYA WAS
REPELLED BY REBELS BUT IS SAID TO HAVE WITNESSED A
EXCHANGE OF FIRE BETWEEN THE DC-3 AND ITS ATTACKERS
BEFORE THE DOWNED PLANE EXPLODED AND BURNED. THE DC-4
WITH MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS AND MINES ZAKARIA ON BOARD,
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WAS SHOT DOWN THE FOLLOWING DAY WHEN IT DEVIATED FROM
ITS FILED FLIGHT PLAN TO OVERFLY THE WRECKED DC-3. IT
REPORTEDLY WAS HIT ALMOST SIMULTANEOUSLY IN TWO MOTORS,
WHICH EXPLODED, WHILE CRAFT WAS FLYING AT 2,700 METERS
ALTITUDE. SINCE IT WAS CARRYING LOAD OF GASOLINE, PILOTS
WENT INTO AN IMMEDIATE DIVE AND CRASH LANDED ON THE ROAD
ABOUT SEVEN KILOMETERS FROM THE FAYA AIRPORT. ALL CREW

AND PASSENGERS GOT OUT BEFORE THE PLANE EXPLODED AND BURNED BUT THE PILOT WAS INJURED BY IMPACT OF CRASH AND IS IN HOSPITAL HIGH IN NDJAMENA. ZAKARIA ESCAPED UNSCATHED BUT SLIGHTLY BRUISED, GASOLINE SPLATTERED, AND THOROUGHLY SHAKEN.

3. MEANWHILE, REBEL RADIO HAS CALLED ON ALL MEMBERS OF FROLINAT SECOND ARMY TO REJOIN CLOSEST BASE AND INSTRUCTED THE 444 GROUP TO MOVE IMMEDIATELY TO THE OFFENSIVE. (FYI WE ARE UNABLE TO IDENTIFY THIS GROUP). THE RADIO ALSO REPORTED THE REFUSAL OF GOC TROOPS AT FAYA TO FIGHT AND URGED ALL CHADIAN MILITARY TO JOIN THEIR BRETHREN IN NOT COMBATTING FROLINAT. ALL WHO AGREED TO THIS ARE TO DISPLAY A WHITE FLAG AS A SIGNAL.

4. COMMENT: THE DOWNING OF TWO PLANES SO CLOSE TO FAYA LARGEAU, AND THE INABILITY OF THE GARRISON THERE TO SORTIE OUT OF THE TOWN AUGER POORLY FOR THE GOVERNMENT'S POSITION IN THE NORTH. IF REBELS ARE RETURNING TO THE OFFENSE AS REBEL RADIO INDICATES, THEY CAN APPARENTLY INTERDICT THE AIRFIELD AT FAYA LARGEAU AT WILL. THIS WOULD ISOLATE GARRISON WHICH IS SUPPLIED ALMOST COMPLETE BY AIR, AND WOULD CAUSE NOT ONLY ITS FALL BUT WOULD FORCE THE EVACUATION OF OUNIANGA KEBIR. GOVERNMENT WOULD THEN HAVE ONLY ONE GARRISON (FADA) IN NORTHERN HALF OF COUNTRY, AND THIS GARRISON COULD BE FORCED TO EVACUATE IN SHORT ORDER BY
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SIMILAR TACTICS. FALL OF FADA WOULD LEAVE LIBYAN BACKED REBELS IN CONTROL OF SEVERAL HUNDRED MILES OF SUDANESE BORDER.BRADFORD

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